One analysis shows that this system cannot be considered as an importation, but that it probably developed among the Bella Coola themselves. After they removed to their new home, a mass of foreign ideas had come into their possession through contact with their new neighbors. While these new ideas were being assimilated and systematized, they stimulated the minds of the people, so of a few members of the tribe, who were then led to the formation of an elaborate concept of the world. The concept which they have developed agrees in all its main features with ideas current in many other areas and of other races. The mind of the Bella Coola philosopher, operating with the class of knowledge common to the native races of culture, has reached conclusions similar to those that have been formed to suit the world over, when operating with the same class of knowledge. On the other hand, the Bella Coola has also adopted readily much the thoughts of his neighbors, and has adapted them to his environment. These two results of our inquiry emphasize the close relation between the comparative and the historic methods of ethnology, which are so often held to be antagonistic. Each is a check upon rash conclusions that might be attained by the application of one alone. It is just as unjustified to see, in an analogy of a single trait of culture that occurs in two distant regions, undoubted proof of early historical connection as to reject the possibility of such connection because sometimes the same ideas develop independently in the human mind. Ethnology is rapidly outgrowing the tendency to accept superficial evidence as proof of historical connection; but the comparative standpoint is hardly beginning to see that he has no right to avail of the historical method. One inquiry shows that safe conclusions can be derived only by a careful analysis of individual cultures. The growth of the myths of the Bella Coola can be understood only when we consider the culture of the tribe as a whole. And so it is with other phenomena. All traits of culture can be fully understood only in connection with the whole culture of a tribe. When we confine ourselves to comparing isolated traits of culture, we open the door to misinterpretations without number.

It does not demand to study the same critical method in the comparative study of ethnology that it has generally been accorded, it does not imply a depreciation of the results of the method. Where the human mind evolves an idea, or where it borrows the same idea, we may assume that it has been evolved or accepted because it conforms with the organization of the human mind; else it would not be evolved or accepted. The order the distribution of an idea, original or borrowed, the object must be in conformity with the laws governing the activities of the human mind. Historical controls will furnish the data necessary to the growth of civilizations among different people; and comparisons of the processes of their growth will give us knowledge of the laws which govern the evolution and evolution of ideas.